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Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-sixth session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Valery **Zhdanovich** (Belarus)

Addendum

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2008-2009

(Item 3 (b))

Programme 20
International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees

1. At its 16th meeting, on 28 August 2006, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered programme 20, International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees, of the proposed biennial programme plan (A/61/6 (Prog. 20)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Appreciation was expressed for the proposed strategic framework and for the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in ensuring the protection of, assistance to, and the search for durable solutions for refugees. Another view was expressed that the proposed strategic framework did not adequately address the situation of stateless persons. In that connection, it was pointed out that the situation of stateless persons was a problem that needed urgent attention.

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4. The view was expressed that, because of the great importance accorded to the programme, full support should be provided to the work of UNHCR to ensure that it and its partners comprehensively addressed the protection needs of refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, stateless persons and internally displaced persons, and in particular the special needs of refugee women, elderly refugees and refugee children and adolescents.

5. The continued emphasis of UNHCR on improving efficiency, transparency and accountability, especially through the institutionalization of results-based management, was underlined, and support for the results of the Project Profile registration system currently in place in UNHCR was expressed.

6. Support was expressed for the format of the proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009 and it was observed that, aside from the merger of the two subprogrammes approved for the biennium 2006-2007 into one, the name of the programme had also been changed.

7. The view was expressed that balance was needed in terms of expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement in order to fully reflect both protection of and assistance to refugees in the work of UNHCR. In that connection, the view was also expressed that "assistance" should be outlined in more measurable terms.

8. With regard to expected accomplishment (a), clarification was sought on the term "enhanced international protection regime", to better understand whether it indicated the introduction of a new protocol, convention, mandate, or other, or whether it was simply intended to strengthen the implementation of the existing protection regime. Concerning expected accomplishments (c) and (d), it was observed that improvements could be introduced to the proposed language.

9. The view was expressed that strengthening the local capacity of countries hosting refugees and the corresponding role of UNHCR in assisting those countries to cope remained of great importance, and clarification was sought as to what that assistance entailed.

10. It was also observed that some countries had been hosts to large numbers of refugees and, in that regard, appreciation was expressed to UNHCR for the assistance provided in responding to the influx of refugees in those countries. In that connection, clarification was sought as to how UNHCR anticipated strengthening host country capacity in providing quality asylum. The view was expressed that many host countries suffered from severe poverty and were faced with the challenge of receiving refugees who were themselves living in extreme poverty, which led to feelings of frustration and potential conflict between host countries and refugees. For that reason, it was observed that strengthening the local capacity remained of great importance and that UNHCR should be provided with the financial resources to carry out its mandate adequately.

11. The view was expressed that all relevant legislative mandates concerning refugees had been properly reflected in the proposed strategic framework. However, clarification was sought for the phrase "all persons of concern to UNHCR" (expected accomplishment (b)) and its significance.

Conclusions and recommendations

12. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the narrative of programme 20, International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees, of the proposed biennial programme plan, subject to the following modifications:

Objective of the Organization

At the end of the paragraph, add the following: "from the outset of an emergency until such time as the beneficiaries have been successfully reintegrated into their communities of origin"

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

In expected accomplishment (a), replace the words "protection regime, including its implementation at the national level" with the words "cooperation in the protection of refugees and others of concern".

At the end of expected accomplishment (d), add the following: "to assist refugees and others of concern to UNHCR in a spirit of burden-sharing and international solidarity"

Add a new expected accomplishment (e) reading: "(e) Progress in helping host countries in the provision of assistance to refugees and others of concern to UNHCR and in strengthening their local capacity to cope with related issues".

Indicators of achievement

In indicator (a)(ii), after the words "Strengthened host country capacity", insert the words ", upon request".

Replace indicator (a)(iii) with the following: "(iii) More efficient processing of refugee status determination".

Add a new indicator (b)(vi) reading: "(vi) Increased number of primary health-care facilities per 10,000 refugees established by UNHCR, as well as other quantifiable improvements brought about with the assistance of UNHCR to meet basic needs of refugees and others of concern to UNHCR".

In indicator (c)(ii), after the words "forced displacement", add the words "in the framework of programmes of voluntary repatriation to the countries of origin".

Replace the text of indicator (d)(iii) with the following: "(iii) Increased number of coordinated initiatives of relevant United Nations agencies aimed at addressing needs of refugees or returnees and the surrounding communities".

Add a new indicator (d)(iv) reading: "(iv) Number of Government agencies involved in the support of countries hosting/reintegrating refugees in accordance with the UNHCR strategy of repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction".

Add a new indicator (e) reading: "(e) Number of countries assisted by UNHCR to provide assistance to refugees and others of concern to UNHCR and to strengthen their capacity to cope with related issues".

Strategy

Paragraph 20.8

At the end of the paragraph, add the following: "UNHCR will also focus on the establishment of so-called "4R" programmes for returnees and internally displaced persons of concern to UNHCR, to ensure the linkages between repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction".